



PARKS & RECREATION AND HARBOR COMMISSION
Minutes
September 5, 2017

Commission Present: Bossange, Kaplan, Hurley, Pierce, Hale, Healy, Caesar and Montroll

Staff Present: Roach, Rogers and Putzier

The meeting was convened at 5:34 p.m. by Commission Chair Kaplan.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made to approve the agenda by adding item 3A. Reorganization of Commission, Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair by Bossange, second by Pierce, motion carried.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Bossange read aloud with the motion included, motion made to approve the consent agenda by Hurley, second by Healy, motion carried.

Reorganization

Kaplan was nominated for Commission, Chair by Hurley, second by Pierce, all were in favor.

Bossange was nominated for Commission, Vice Chair by Hurley, second by Pierce, motion carried.

Revised City Hall Park Design Plan

Meagan Tuttle, Planning and Zoning Planner, Great Streets, explained how the process occurred from inception and then spoke to what has occurred since she last came in December. Working on revisions specifically related to City Hall Park. Talked about feedback that had been received and shared updated plan. Three major pieces; create downtown street design standards, create Main Street Concept Plan and design and build Park as main project.

Spoke specifically about City Hall Park. Started in 2011 with task force and some of the maintenance and behavior issues. Want to maintain central gathering spot through short and long term solutions, public and stakeholder engagement resulted in a conceptual plan for the reconstruction of City Hall Park as well as interim solutions for providing more activity, improving cleanliness and security.

Asked what people loved about City Hall Park currently and what would like to see in the future, from over 800 people. Reached out to many users as well as those for improving. Resulted in a design concept in 2014 and then in 2016 moved forward with Great Streets initiative. Presented in November and December 2016 to NPA's and Commissions for input. Historic preservation was a big issue, wanted to be sensitive to historic character and defining features. Anticipate 2019 spring construction to City Hall Park.

A major change in plan was reconstruction of central gathering place, could be more of a usable gathering space, pop jet fountain, pathways were realigned for better mobility and ADA accessibility, flexible spaces along outside near BCA, contemplated several terraces and temporary spaces.

Looked at how to improve ecology, un-programmed areas, help with storm water management and the healthier trees along Main Street side. Based on how it has functioned as a whole and with connectivity to the spaces and elements.

Ecology; improve health management of soil, trees, grass important, addition of rain gardens positive.



Size, location and edge treatment of pathways important to encourage walking on paths rather than cow paths in lawn.

Trees & Vegetation; improve accessibility, many advocated public restrooms and concern about safety, cleanliness, and suggestions for stand-alone facility rather than a building. Park as both a destination and part of the network walking route, downtown pathway locations and width, paths should be smooth, level, ADA tested and elements should not impede people with mobility challenges, range of seating options positive, would like drinking fountain and bike racks.

Modern civic uses; many felt the plan strikes balance between active/passive uses challenges and role as an urban gathering space. Others proposed a Central Park or naturalized approach to redesign, food or other vending permanent vs temporary or none at all, ending opportunities solicited through RFP, not to the exclusion of non-paying. Flexible spaces for variety of events and purposes positive; however, avoid large, ticketed events, some feel unsafe.

Historic characterizations and reorganizing paths; overall assessment was will not destroy parks contribution to historic district, making central space more oval than rectangular, changing fountain ok but need an upright focal element or art piece.

In conclusion showed a revised plan, with more trees/vegetation, but alignment and shape has changed, will be mindful that some trees may need to be nursed back to health and identify other trees to be added. Maintained two storm water gardens. Want more ADA grades of paths and want to place pathway to avoid some of the healthiest trees and sheet water off before it collects, added more bike parking on two sides of the park, placed a stand-alone restroom, will be constructed in a future phase.

Caesar asked about collaborating with private businesses to use restrooms to save space within the park, told by Tuttle restroom usage is a big issue. Working on right sizing and will likely eliminate terraces to save the trees, also added a placeholder for utility connection for kiosk, pilot before building. Last change was to the center to make into more of an oval shape.

Plan to bring forward to the Planning Commission for approval and would like Commission to co-sponsor to the City Council.

Healy asked since delayed until 2019, would they continue to take input and comments. Told will follow the same process, if approved would put before Design Review Board and public comment would be part of that as well.

Bossange thanked for the process and felt the opportunity for all to be engaged was done well. Happy will continue to make an active park and not a woodlands or inactive. Like the idea of having the Farmers Market on the outside. Asked about feasibility and if funding was going well and was told yes. Would like to see benches on the pathways. Would also like to see pipe rails along the pathway to help define the traffic. Asked about how the fountain would function, told it could be turned on and off. Bossange wanted to stay away from artwork and felt it was too subjective.

Hurley asked about in the meantime would the fountain continue as is until the upgrades happen and was concerned with using more resources to maintain due to old age and inefficient. Roach stated currently spending \$5-\$10,000 per year in keeping up and will continue to do. The fountain has a water feed that comes from City Hall and has a leak, very cumbersome, don't know how long it will last and is very deep, goes under trees and the infrastructure. Worst-case scenario will need to replace. Make sure it is dry and blown out so that it will not receive any frost damage, two parts to the fountain, the mechanics are the most of concern. Hope to keep it going.

Caesar said no matter how many trees in the park would like to keep as many trees as possible over paved walkways and asked about permeable pavers, majority of the pavers will be permeable pavers, trying to maximize



the infrastructure. Felt kiosks would spend a large part of the year going unused due to the weather and felt would take up too much space, unsightly and would not be used.

Pierce asked if there was a plan for the old fountain, have identified a location, battery and the foot of College Street. Still discussing locations and potential uses.

Montroll asked about what would happen to the statue and time capsule that is currently in the park, proposing stay in exact locations with the exception of the time capsule which may be moved within the park.

Kaplan asked about the process being requested by the Commission and was told looking for recommendation to approve the contract piece from the Commission.

Question was asked; during the construction phase, will whole park be closed, where will Farmers Market be located? Meagan anticipated for one full year of construction and would be completely closed, Farmers Market would look at another location and is talking with BPRW currently. Kaplan was concerned with traffic coinciding with the Mall construction.

Roach asked specifically what this summer will be what part of Great Streets, and was told St. Paul Street will be coming in the summer, just short of Main Street and then the following summer would be City Hall Park.

Caesar asked where considering relocating the Farmers Market and Roach said has not been updated since the start of the season, will be in touch with them and come back to the Commission with an update on the plan.

Rogers asked about the low fountains and if it will be pedestrian friendly and was told yes.

Roach said need to be mindful of the kiosk to be supportive of events, user friendly and safe.

Pierce stated that he felt the information about bulletin boards could use more attention and information.

Caesar asked if there would be more performances in the park if the fountains could be shut off and or used in collaboration with and was told yes.

Tuttle spoke to the bulletin boards and said they had many conversations and will continue to look at curated and uncharted bulletin boards.

Motion to recommend support moving forward with construction by Bossange, second by Pierce, motion carried.

Public Forum (Time Certain 6:00PM, 3 min. per person time limit)

Public forum opened at 6:06 p.m. by Commission Chair Kaplan.

James Lockridge, Burlington resident stated he was very happy with the presentation from Tuttle and gave a handout of the proposed City Hall Park concept. He spoke specifically to public bulletin boards, hoping will give back to community and make a priority. Benefited many artists, two proposed to be put back in the park; one near BCA and worried that the public may not have what it had previously or the equivalent. Felt the City could make a very minimal maintenance investment, added many layers of value to the economy. Second point was to the design proposal; disliked the concept of glass boards using tape for posting, would like the traditional three that previously were installed using staples, would like to bring back that style.

Public forum closed at 6:12 p.m.



Dogs at Oakledge Park

Ms. Sherry Elrich stated that she was walking her dog and it was attacked on three separate occasions, this last time she had no idea who the owner was, it had no collar, the owner then was yelling at her and in the exchange she was told that the leash law was debatable. Elrich went to a BPRW employee and asked if the employee could tell the owner of the dog there was a leash law. The staff person would not and stated that they could not help her in any way, they did not have authority and the leash law did not apply to Oakledge. Elrich was hoping to get some answers or training of staff.

Kaplan said she was sorry that happened to her and have had many issues around this specific issue, definitely is a leash law and have two dog parks that allow off leash. Stated that she hit a time when the Director position was vacant, and not the appropriate response/discussion would have happened, would have been resolved. It is true that the staff really are not the enforcers or have any authority. Have a new Director that will be starting in 3-4 weeks and will continue the conversation, the answer currently is the police are the ones to call and handle this type of situation. Kaplan said would have a more thorough discussion with persons that could go to the Police and have a lengthier discussion, as well as continue to speak with Joan and others.

Pass along information to seasonal staff during training.

Bossange stated that as a citizen you can go to the police and let them know that there is a need to have Parks Patrol at Oakledge Park during specific hours, feels right and correct to do so.

Jon Adams-Kollitz stated that he understood what she was talking about, recently did a siting study and would strongly suggest getting involved in that process, would be helpful with some of the behavior problems.

Roach said in 2012 the department was asked to look at the current pilot program, had meetings and came up with a report. It was sent to the City Council and recommendations contained enforcement and residents, tried to create a plan that is both pragmatic in building dog safe environment and trying to relate to those that don't use the dog parks. It was highly subjective, many members that don't have dogs were on the Board and it took a lot of time and effort. The reality was people go that don't care what the rules are with signage, also a huge cultural issue and when the patrol started issuing tickets people got angry and it has not been easy or supported. A lot of contesting issues have taken priority. Need more resources from the Police Department.

St. Joseph's (Old North end Community Center)

Rogers stated that he would give a more complete update and tour at the next meeting and gave a 5-minute synopsis.

Had a kick off and hired new custodial and programmer at the building, a lot of ties to New American community moving 4 staff to the new facility, who are very excited. The new brochure has several items listed for the new facility. Very Merry Theatre and the Vermont Hindu Association are both lessors in the building. Very similar to that of the teen center in the Miller Community Rec Center. Wiring will happen tomorrow and then move in will occur. The facility has been getting a lot of great press.

Caesar asked what was happening with Champlain Senior Center and Rogers stated that the Center would be moving into the new space on Allen Street on November 1st. He also asked about having more space for Nepali Senior community and during the rest of the week, lacking resources and struggling to find more space and asked if anything was being done to address this and was told yes by Rogers.

Bossange stated that important that the people that are currently using are able to remain but encouraged to speak to him further and or to Rogers. Rogers also stated that it is dependent on when translators are available to help and for that community to feel comfortable.



Director's Items

Roach stated no smoking ordinance passed and been busy trying to do a lot of outreach and have currently 73 notices and posts and was given the highly offended areas to post in, still have existing signage at athletic fields and Skate Park to cover, gave language to provide to other staff, inventory of about 3,000 signs in 40 parks. Had interns go around and take pictures and trying to be cautious of over signage. The requests come in heavy.

Jon Adams-Kollitz asked if all got the Bike Path updates and said he would make sure everyone was getting them. Paving is scheduled for September 12th, will see landscaping at intersections and at the end of the month set for reopening. Will have 3-4 crossings, will not affect Ferry crossing schedule and then start 2b overpass to Shore Road. Starting layout and surveying in that section. Will go out with tree team and look at trees to save and then do additional planting in the right of way. Paving of 2b would be mid-November.

Kaplan asked if the Bike Path would be open all winter and was told yes. Then asked if not finished if it would be useable, was going to have to be discussed further.

Last week started rehabilitation of Roosevelt court resurfacing; the cost each year has grown to the point of redoing the entire area, also to include the academic center and making intersection safer and more accessible.

Oakledge Universal Playground plans looked fantastic, when built will be very amazing, soon will begin fund raising campaign, 9/13 will be public meeting to bring all up to speed and start selling to the public. Kaplan asked to have the Pease folks come and present at the next Commission meeting.

Rogers stated that Open Streets event is happening on September 17th and explained it was in the South End and gave some streets that would be included.

Commissioner's Items

Healy thanked for the Bike Path update, has been a huge surprise for the residents and hope it will not affect the drivers in the same way. The drivers were very surprised, bikers were very aware.

Bossange stated that the Parks Foundation is creating 3 more parks along the Bike Path, put together a coalition for Arms Park and Rock Point to create trails for everyone. Putting together a brochure, budget and mission statement of how it will work. Doing a private campaign for a 5th park near the Elks Lodge.

Caesar stated the bike paths are awesome, loves road biking and the space on North Avenue, very comfortable ride and appreciated being able to have a safe and enjoyable ride.

Pierce asked if there were any plans to have benches at the Waterfront dog park and Adams-Kollitz said yes as well as trees for shade.

Kaplan said that if meeting at 5:30 p.m. was a problem should look at changing the time, asked all to think about and put on the next agenda to discuss.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. by Bossange, second by Healy, motion carried.